

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR, MX
SUBJECT: REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT FOR SDC MOPSS TEAM

REF: STATE 310390

1. PARA SIX REFTTEL SUGGESTED THAT MISSION QUERY ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE (AG) RE "USE OF ANOTHER AIRCRAFT EQUIPPED FOR MOPSS OPERATIONS" WHEN AIRCRAFT CURRENTLY USED BY SPECTRAL DATA CORPORATION (SDC) FOR JULTISPECTRAL SENSING (MOPSS) MISSIONS IS GROUNDED FOR 1000-HOUR OVERHAUL IN LATE FEBRUARY OR EARLY MARCH. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, ONLY OTHER AIRCRAFT SO EQUIPPED IS ASSIGNED TO MEXICAN MOPSS TEAM.

2. WHILE AIRCRAFT ASSIGNED TO MEXICAN MOPSS TEAM HAS BEEN UNDER-UTILIZED SINCE SEPTEMBER, WE HAVE NOT GIVEN UP HOPE THAT NEW AG MANAGEMENT CAN MAKE EFFECTIVE USE OF MOPSS OUTPUT OF BOTH SDC AND MEXICAN TEAMS. WE HAVE NOT YET INITIATED DISCUSSIONS WITH NEW MANAGEMENT ON THIS SUBJECT, AS WE FEEL
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IT MORE URGENT TO GET SPRAY OPERATION RUNNING SMOOTHLY IN EARLY JANUARY. HOWEVER, MEXICAN MOPSS UTILIZATION IS HIGH ON OUR AGENDA OF PROBLEMS TO BE ADDRESSED.

3. WE QUESTION, THEREFORE, WISDOM OF BORROWING AIRCRAFT
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ASSIGNED TO MEXICAN MOPSS TEAM FOR EXTENDED PERIOD AT HEIGHT OF SPRING CAMPAIGN, IN EFFECT INVITING AG TO DISCOUNT TOTALLY ITS HALF OF THE MOPSS PROGRAM. AS WE SEE IT, WE HAVE FOUR OPTIONS:
(A) BORROW MEXICAN MOPSS AIRCRAFT. THIS REQUIRES NO USG EXPENDITURE BUT DEADLINES AN ENTIRE MOPSS SYSTEM.

(B) RENT IN THE US A PHOTO-EQUIPPED AIRCRAFT TO REPLACE SDC AIRCRAFT DURING OVERHAUL PERIOD. AVIATION ADVISOR HAS SEVERAL LEADS TO PRIVATE SECTOR WHICH HE IS PURSUING AND NOTES THAT DEPARTMENT MAY ALSO BE ABLE TO LOCATE SUITABLE AIRCRAFT THROUGH NASA OR EPA.

(C) MODIFY THIRD AEROCOMMANDER (XC-CON) IN AG AIRFLEET FOR CAMERAS. THIS AIRCRAFT WOULD ALSO REQUIRE NEW ENGINES AND OXYGEN SYSTEM BUT, AFTER MODIFICATION, WOULD BE PERMANENTLY AVAILABLE EITHER FOR MOPSS PHOTO MISSIONS OF FOR PERSONNEL AND CARGO TRANSPORT. IF WE PROCEED RAPIDLY WE COULD PROBABLY HAVE AIRCRAFT MODIFIED IN US BEFORE END OF FEBRUARY AT COST OF ABOUT DOLS 100,000.

(D) PROVIDE NEW PHOTO AIRCRAFT TO AG.

4. FROM OUR VIEWPOINT WE WOULD PREFER OPTION (B) OR (C). OPTION (B) WOULD PERMIT SDC TO CONTINUE WORK WHILE ITS PRESENT AIRCRAFT IS OVERHAULED WITHOUT PREJUDICING MEXICAN MOPSS OPERATION, YET SHOULD COST AROUND DOLS 5,000 PER MONTH. OPTION (C) WOULD GIVE AG ABILITY TO KEEP AT LEAST TWO PHOTO AIRCRAFT AIRBORNE AT ALL TIMES AND WOULD PREVENT RECURRENCE OF PROBLEMS ABOUT WHICH SDC RECENTLY COMPLAINED. BOTH OPTIONS WOULD UNDERSCORE THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO MOPSS AND HELP US IN OUR ATTEMPTS TO OBTAIN BETTER UTILIZATION OF MOPSS SYSTEM ASSIGNED TO MEXICAN TEAM.

5. WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT COMMENTS BEFORE APPROACHING AG AS REQUESTED REFTEL.

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